

UNION

2020 Annual Report





*400 Volunteer hours
contributed by Union team members
in service of partner organizations
meeting essential needs*

Recognizing that moments of crisis demand radical action, when The Union closed our doors for social distancing in March of 2020, we fully reimagined our programming and public offerings while our community weathered the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We named the initiative Radical HeARTS – understanding that in these unusual times, in order to truly achieve our mission of “strengthen[ing] the cultural and social landscape of our community,” nothing less than an effort of radical transformation and unflinching compassion was required.

Throughout 2020, we redirected our organizational efforts toward new direct and meaningful actions that sought to help alleviate the ongoing effects of the COVID crisis in our North Omaha community and beyond.





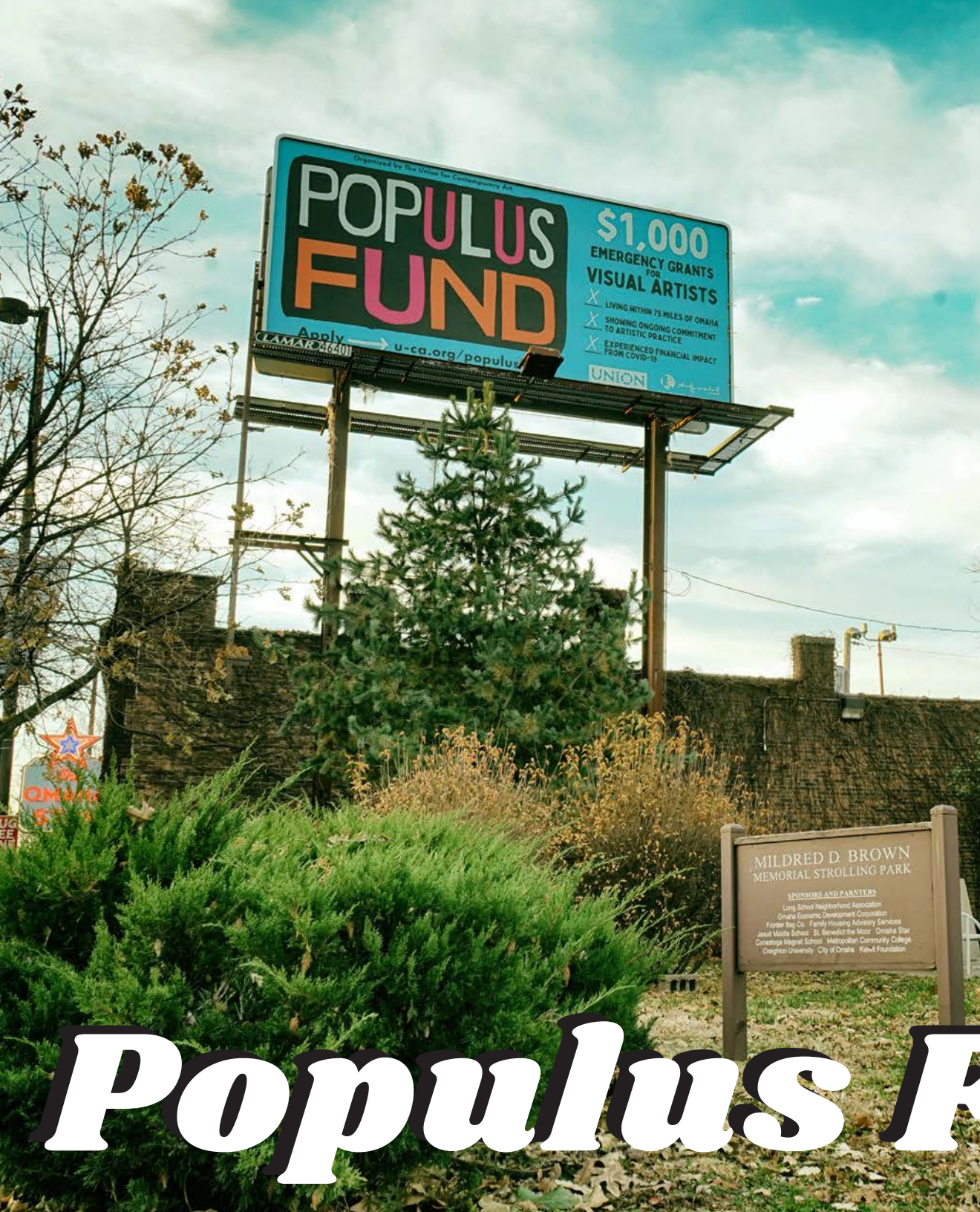
Following the murder of George Floyd in Minnesota and James Scurlock here in Omaha, members of The Union's Co-Op Studios team screen-printed a few "Black Lives Matter" posters in our Print Shop. Very quickly, we received several requests from people around Omaha who wanted to display solidarity in the windows of their homes and businesses. Through the first half of June we printed as many posters as possible to keep up with growing demand.

While demand for the posters seemed to be endless, we concluded the project on June 17 after distributing more than 3,000 posters. Our Executive Director Brigitte McQueen noted at the time:

"It's been encouraging to see so many people eager to affirm the value and dignity of Black lives by placing this message in their homes, churches, and businesses. The whole experience (which none of us ever imagined would become such an 'experience') has also given our organization reason to pause, look within, and fully acknowledge that three words on a poster can only ever scratch the surface of the labor that MUST be done before Black lives fully, finally matter in this country. I am asking you to stand with my Union family and invest yourself in helping us do the vital work that needs to be moved forward. Our actions need to fall in line with our words, which demands that each of us interrogate ALL the places white supremacy is manifest in our society and ourSELVES, and with every bit of wisdom and grace we can gather . . . banish it forever."

Though we shared all the posters for free, so many generous people were compelled to donate to The Union in support of the effort. Every dollar donated was used to present our Uplift + Elevate exhibition series in the fall of 2020.

Over 3,000 "Black Lives Matter" posters distributed for free in one week, resulting in nearly \$30,000 in donations used to support Black-owned businesses and BIPOC artists



Launched in 2020, Populus Fund is a new regranting initiative organized by The Union, through the generous support of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts in order to support innovative artist projects throughout Omaha–Lincoln metros. Populus Fund was founded to provide essential support for projects that expand our understanding of how art exists in the world, address community needs, and exemplify new ways of working in, for, and with the public.

In 2020, in the midst of multiple pandemics, many artists were in need of critical financial support. Populus Fund's inaugural grants were designated as unrestricted emergency funds to support vital needs such as medical bills, rent, debts, and food. The fund awarded ninety-six \$1,000 grants using a weighted lottery system for a total of \$96,000 awarded to Omaha-area artists by the end of 2020.

\$96,000 In COVID-19 emergency grants distributed to local artists

Populus Fund

When COVID hit, we knew our free-pick community garden would be central to our Radical HeARTS initiatives, offering direct support to our community during this time of illness.

To maintain safe distancing, we moved to a drive-thru pick up model this year. Union team members and many amazing volunteers harvested, prepared, and packaged produce that we shared from our drive-thru parking lot produce stand all summer into fall.

We're so thankful for our ongoing partnership with The Big Garden who provided us with plants this year, and also to Sacred Seed Pop-Up and No More Empty Pots for sharing produce and supporting our efforts this year!!

721 Pounds of fresh Abundance Garden produce shared for free with our community



***Abundance
Garden***

EXHIBITION



In 2020, the Exhibition program innovated the ways in which we're able to present new work to audiences. Over the summer, as part of The Union's Pride celebrations we partnered with two Omaha-based culture workers – artist Tiana Conyers and curator Ang R Bennett – in the creation of five billboards, featuring LGBTQIA2S+ people of color from Omaha. The project, titled *We Thrive in Middle Spaces* was supported by the Equality Fund through Omaha Community Foundation.

In the fall, the Uplift & Elevate exhibition series presented the work of local and regional Black artists in non-traditional settings while our Wanda D. Ewing Gallery remained closed for social distancing.

100% of the funds used to support all artists contributing to Uplift & Elevate were sourced through public donations made during The Union's Black Lives Matter poster printing initiative in June 2020.

17 Local artists of the African diaspora supported through the Uplift + Elevate exhibition and performance series

Youth



In order to stay connected with the dozens of young people enrolled in Union programming and their families, in 2020 our Youth Engagement program pivoted to creating over 1,000 Art + Life Kits. Distributed bi-weekly throughout the year, these kits provided artmaking materials and creativity prompts plus healthy food and snacks to be enjoyed by the whole family.

We also stayed connected through virtual engagements all year, bringing teaching artists and young creatives together so they could keep learning while distanced.

Over 1,000 Art + Life Kits distributed to families in Union Youth Programming

Performing Arts



DROP THE
CHARGES
AGAINST D

***52 hours invested in
workshopping, rehearsing, &
recording the new musical,
Fry Daddies, by Eric Lawson***

While our theater was closed for most of the year for social distancing, we were thrilled to host UNO Theater for a collaborative production of *Blood at the Root* in February and March.

Like so many theaters around the world, ours went dark when the pandemic hit. For the rest of the year, the Performing Arts program turned its energy to the development of new work by Omaha-area theater practitioners. Union Producing Artistic Director or Theatre Denise Chapman collaborated with Performing Arts Collective member Eric Lawson in writing and workshopping his new musical *Fry Daddies*. We also began the planning process for an innovative new theatrical experience that would materialize as *Pursuing Legacy* in 2021.

A woman with glasses and a grey t-shirt is seated at a table, focused on carving a wooden block. The table is covered with a red cloth and holds various art supplies, including jars of paint and brushes. In the background, a pink mannequin stands near a window, and a brick wall features a sign that says "I matter".

I matter

The 2020 Inside/Outside Fellows made amazing strides and creative developments out of this very unexpected year. With talents ranging from photography and painting, to fashion design and dance performance - this year's cohort each found individually innovative ways to reach their audiences, foster community, and broaden their talents!

2020 FELLOWSHIP COHORT

Allegra Hangen - Photography Videography, & Multimedia

Michael Elizabeth Johnson - Interdisciplinary

Alajia McKizia - Multimedia and Performance

DeAndre Rhodes - Photography and Videography

Patty Talbert - Painting and Multimedia

Inside/Outside Fellowship



Co-Op Studios

While our building was closed we had to get especially creative to find new ways of supporting Co-Op members who rely on the resources and equipment found in our five art-making studios. One solution was the Distanced Membership initiative. We kept the kilns hot for firing work that ceramicists were making at home. And in the Print Shop, we burned fresh screens for printmakers.

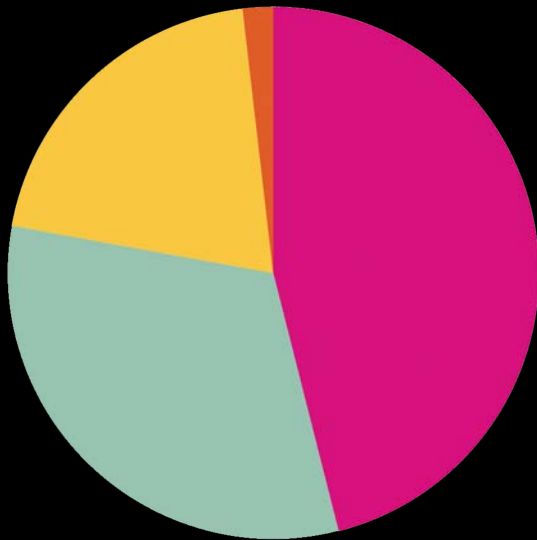
We also started the “Open Studio” web series, featuring several local artists in conversation (over Zoom), showing off their home studios and discussing how the pandemic and social distancing were impacting their creative work. It was an inspiring look into the lives of artists who were finding solace in their work, and was also a fun way to stay connected while we were apart.

The Distanced Membership initiative and Open Studio web series kept Co-Op artists creating and connected

Income & Expenditures

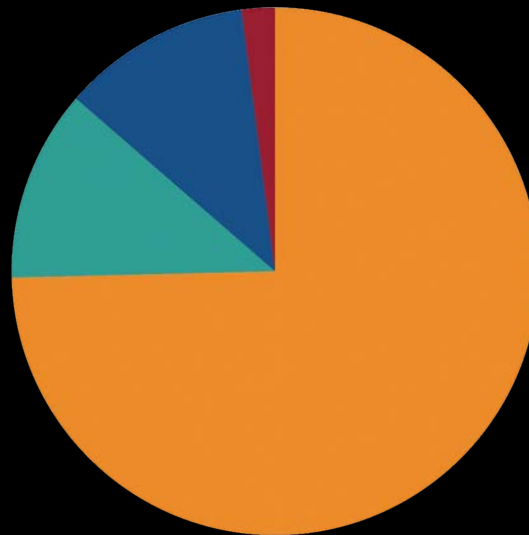
Financials reported in our annual report are calculated on a cash basis, reflecting income and expenses exchanged within the fiscal year.

CONTRIBUTED SUPPORT



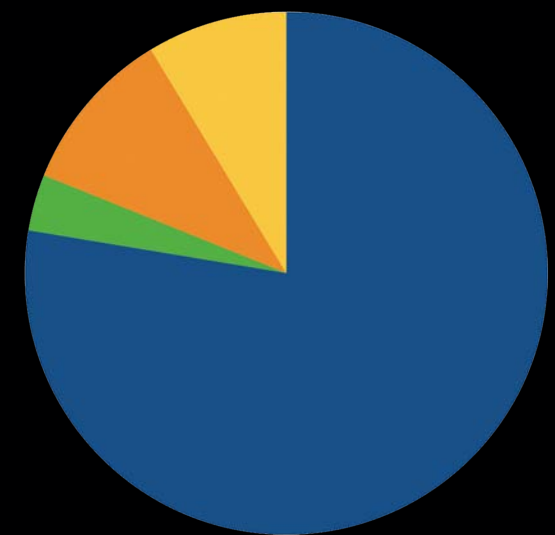
Foundations	\$590,000
Government Grants	\$407,641
Individuals	\$260,177
Corporations	\$23,603
TOTAL	\$1,281,421

EARNED REVENUE



Program Fees	\$7,844
Membership Dues	\$1,236
Product Sales	\$1,220
Other	\$213
TOTAL	\$10,512

EXPENDITURES



General Programs & Projects	\$939,402
Fundraising	\$123,844
Populus Fund	\$104,846
General Operating & Administration	\$42,185
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,210,277

TO NET ASSETS: -\$81,656
TOTAL INCOME: \$1,210,277

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,210,277

Supporters

\$20,000+

Anonymous
Richard Brooke Foundation
Douglas County Visitor Improvement Fund
Holland Foundation
Peter Kiewit Foundation
Lozier Foundation
Mid-America Arts Alliance
National Endowment for the Arts
The NBK Foundation
Nebraska Arts Council and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment
North Omaha Turn-Back Tax Historical Grant
Omaha Community Foundation
The Sherwood Foundation
Fred and Eve Simon Charitable Foundation
Paul and Annette Smith
The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts
Weitz Family Foundation
Roger and Kate Weitz
Drew and Meredith Weitz

\$19,999 to \$10,000

Nebraska Civic Engagement Table
The Phillip and Terri Schragger Foundation
Bill and Ruth Scott
Katie Weitz, PhD and Tim Wilson

\$9,999 to \$2,500

Karen and Taylor Borchert
Claire M Hubbard Foundation
Humanities Nebraska
Lincoln Financial Foundation, Inc.
Kevin McCarthy
Michael and Nancy McCarthy
Mulhall's
Mutual of Omaha Foundation
Lindsey Scott
Emily Sommer
Julia Vlock
Wells Fargo Foundation

\$2,499 to \$1,000

Kali Baker Memorial Fund
Jacque and Adam Christensen
Jeri and Tom Dollison
Elouise Ewing
Giger Foundation
Cindy and Scott Heider

Bill and Stacia Hoover
Andrea Kathol
Leadership Omaha Giving Circle
Susan and Mike Lebens
Jay Lund
Made in Omaha
Bruce and Lisa Moritz
Amy Nelson
Murray and Sharee Newman
Pape Family Foundation
Richard and Mary Parrish
Robin Pierson Barber
Women's Fund of Omaha

\$999 to \$500

Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture
Nick Allmaker
Dundee Bank
Bluestem Prairie Foundation
Ann and Jim Carroll
Amy Dorton
Adrian Duran and Alexandra Cardon
Max and Beth Engel
Randy and Bev Greer
Vic Gutman & Associates
John and Wende Kotouc
Jim and Diny Landen
Jessica McKay
Othello and Tulani Meadows
Vera Mercer
Judy Pearl-Lee
Patricia and Thomas Peterson
Kristin and Mark Pluhacek
Luke and Autumn Pruitt
Pegeen Reilly
Jeffrey J. Schragger and Anne S. York Family Foundation
Sumana Sermchief and Caleb Seavey
Lauren Simpson
Sue and Mary Stroesser
Kale Zicafoose and Tyler Palin

\$499 to \$100

Susan A
Steve McQueen and Janet Abbo
John Amdor
Anonymous
Colleen and Darin Anthony
Luke Armstrong
Carl Ashford
Conrad Barber
Allie Barnhart
Natalie Bassett
Jessica Benjamin

Lori Benton
Laura Berman
Karen Berry and John Pollack
Jennie Borchert
Maureen and Nicholas Borman
Tokey Boswell
Eric Bowman
Christian and Carol Burk
Julia Buskirk
Celeste Butler
Patricia Carter
Kyle and Koren Cartwright
Christian and Debra Christensen
Erin and Dan Cihal
Melanie and Fred Clark
Krista Cleary
Tiffany Clifton
Erika and Colin Conces
Carmelita Cox
Dave Crane
Patricia Crisler
Lesa Crockett
Bob Culver
Drew Davies
Bradley Davis
Molly Deacon
Michelle Elson-Roza
Corina Figueroa
Devin Fox
Kathleen Gallagher
Carol Gilbert
Sarah and Dan Gilbert
David Goldner
Donald Goldstein
Suzanne Grandinetti
Kimberly Grassmeyer
Mr. and Mrs. Howard B. Green
Dan Crane and Megan Green
Jennifer Green
Mike and Kathy Gross
Brian Guehring
Anne Guinan
Thomas Guttermann
Howard and Carol Hahn
Amy Haney
Jason Helvey
Ann and Gary Henningsen
Kasey Hesse
Shari Hofschire
Hoover Dental
Tressa Hoover
Jaci House
Donna Huber
Hutch, Inc.
Shaun Ilahi

Chip James
Ellen Jeffries
Annika Johnson
Daniel Johnson
Emma Johnson
Matt Karasek
Don Keelan-White
Justin and Katie Kemerling
Kinghorn Horticultural Services, Inc.
Andrea Kinnan
Margaret Kirkeby
Zachary Konrad
Melissa Kopplin
Mary Koraleski
Mike Krainak and Janet Farber
Steve and Debbie Krambeck
Jessica Latch
Krissa Lee-Regier
Michael and Cathy Lien
Kristin Luce
Megan Lutz
Brett Major
Ben and Morgan Maloy
Grace Manley
Mark Mapes
Pamela Marchant
Matt and Sarah Mason
Joanie Mathis
Carol McCabe
Jean McCammond Walker
Katy and Timothy McEvoy
Susan McGillick
Trisha Meehan
Dana Ryan Mike
Noah Mock
Jessica Maynard
Sean Mulhall
Mick Mulhall
Elizabeth Murphy
Anna and David Nance
Constans Nathalie
Honorable Ben & Mrs. Diane Nelson
Kerianne Newland
Stanislava Nikolova
Michael O'Bradovich
Phyllis Ogden
Dene Oglesby
Matthew Olsen
Neil Orians
Brenda Orr
Small Joy
Carolyn Owen Anderson
Robert Patterson
Jen Pavkov
Kjell Peterson

Pam Pierce
James Poppert
Hobson and Denise Powell
Leanne Prewitt and Ryan Sorensen
Dan and Nancy Pridal
Jennifer and Ken Reed-Bouley
Randall Rennau
Rachel Rentschler
Joseph Rohleder
Lee Running
Rick and Carol Russell
Lauren Schaal
Patricia Schaefer and Brian Montgomery
Lucy Schroeder
James Sealey
Cary Sharkey
Steven Shuff
Vanessa Silke
Geoffrey Silverstein
Kathi Smith
Stewart and Susie Smoler
Connie and Richard Spellman
Melany Spiehs
Sarah Spurgin
Meghan Stevens
Jean Stillmock
Anne Stockmann
Bob Benzel and Gerry Sullivan
Michelle Sullivan
Kelli Sweet and Drew Hallock
Leslie Swenson
Jeff Tafolla and Melissa Wurth
Melissa and Benjamin Teply
Ann and Kumi Thariani
Wendy Townley
Paul and Jessica Urban
Cristina Victor
Ashley Voorhees
Jim and Maureen Waldron
Kim Walker
Michael Webb
Molly Welsh
Amy Wenzl
Nikolas Whitcomb
Christina Wolfgang
Scott Working
Adam and Sarah Yale
Kristin Zahra

People & Partners

UNION STAFF

Denise Chapman | Producing Artistic Director, Theatre

Tia Dawson | Administrative Assistant

Jessica Freeman | Youth Studios Assistant

Dan Crane | Print + Design Manager

Kat Fackler | Events + Project Manager

Sarah Jones | Co-Op Studios Manager

Megan King | Manager of Foundation +
Corporate Relations

Caitlin LaVelle | Manager of Individual
Giving + Stewardship

Mary Lawson | Program Coordinator

Joey Lynch | Director of Facilities + Sustainability

Patrick Mainelli | Communications Director

Brigitte McQueen | Founder + Executive Director

Paige Reitz | Deputy Director

Jacqueline Smith | Youth Studios Manager

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karen Borchert | *Chair*

Erin Cihal | *Vice Chair*

Bruce Moritz | *Treasurer*

Wendy Townley | *Secretary*

Drew Weitz | *Immediate Past-Chair*

Alexis Bromley

Celeste Butler

Adrian Duran

Shaun Ilahi

Ali Maloy

Jessica McKay

Tulani Grundy Meadows

Amy Nelson

Jen Pavkov

Carol Russell

Susan Stroesser

2020 YOUTH TEACHING ARTISTS

When our building closed for COVID in March, The Union committed to continuing to pay the teaching artists we were working with through the end of their terms. In total, we provided nearly \$13,000 in compensation to members of our creative community who were essential for facilitating our Youth Engagement program through this unusual year.

Angela Bennett

Teri Coolidge

Jessica Freeman

Cyrus Jefferson

Emily Mitchell

Liliana Monjarez-Falcon

Thalia Rodgers

Sarah Schneiderwind

Katie Schroeder

Tyler Swain

Cristina Victor

Thomas White

Samantha Zarders

2020 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Bemis Center

Opera Omaha

No More Empty Pots

Girls Inc

OUR STELLAR VOLUNTEERS

Dundee Bank Staff Volunteers

RISE of Flywheel

UNITED ERG

Maureen Waldron



UNION

Bacchanalia. Soft sculpture collection by 2020 Union Fellow Michael Elizabeth Johnson.